

October 30, 1962

TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: S/3
FROM: AIA - Edwin M. Martin
SUBJECT: Guarantees from Cuba with respect to Subversive Activities

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State MLK-77-1063
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The question has been raised as to whether or not in connection with our assurances not to invade we should seek assurances not only with respect to offensive weapons but also with respect to subversive activities against Latin American countries from Cuba or by the present Cuban regime.

It is recommended that no attempt be made to secure such assurances for the following reasons:

(1) The initiative with respect to subversive activities of a communist character against existing regimes in Latin America comes from Cuba, from other Soviet bloc countries and from indigenous communist or Castro-sympathizing groups. While it would be of significant help if activities from Cuba were stopped, it would not be at all impossible to step up initiatives from other Soviet bloc countries to take Cuba's place. It does not seem feasible to seek assurances from all bloc countries to stay out of Latin America. There would still remain the indigenous communist forces to be dealt with and, therefore, the communist problem in Latin America would by no means disappear.

(2) Such assurances might give cause for Latin American countries to relax present inadequate but still helpful efforts to control communist subversion within their boundaries. This would be most unfortunate, since, for reasons given above, one could still expect substantial efforts to upset present regimes and defeat their programs.

(3) The definition of subversive activities to be stopped and the enforcement of any such agreement as defined would be extraordinarily difficult. On the other hand it is difficult to draw a line between information and educational activities and subversion, between the selling of arms and the provision of arms for guerrilla forces and civil violence, between providing funds for cultural and educational purposes and providing funds for

subversive organizations. On the other hand it is extraordinarily difficult to detect and prove those activities which everyone would agree were subversive. It would be a massive undertaking with constant argument and little result.

(4) To secure any such commitment from Cuba the United States would almost certainly have to accept commitments to refrain from subversive activities against the regime in Cuba. It would ~~also~~ have to agree to seek similar commitments from other Latin American countries. Such a commitment on our part has a number of strong disadvantages:

(a) It would go strongly counter to United States policy and to Hemisphere policy as agreed upon at Punta del Este and elsewhere to tie our hands with respect to a communist regime in the Hemisphere with ties of any kind to the Soviet Bloc.

(b) It would be impossible for the United States to have any assurance that the other Latin American countries would be willing or able to enforce such an agreement on their citizens and the United States would be blamed for violations by them.

(c) The United States itself would undoubtedly comply much more honestly than the Castro regime and thereby put itself at a serious disadvantage with respect to a regime which we would like to see disappear. At the same time that major activities by us would be curtailed, we do not have the capacity to completely control the activities of the exile groups. They would continue to mount pin pricks which would subject us to criticism at the same time that we were getting no benefits from a major effort.

(d) Not only with refugee groups but with our own citizens, we would have great difficulty in view of our traditions of free speech in convincing those responsible for enforcing such an agreement that there was a legitimate distinction between the activities of the government and those United States citizens. In other words our governmental system would ensure that we would be in constant hot water with our own people on the one hand and international bodies on the other without accomplishing anything very substantial.

For all these reasons it seems highly desirable to avoid any discussion of reciprocal commitments with respect to any aspect of the question of subversion and confine commitments to strictly military matters.

TRANSCRIBED PAGES FOLLOW

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